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TELL Project

In a way, I feel like my whole life has revolved around shoes. Growing up I remember going shoe shopping with my mom and I remember having my feet measured; it was always so exciting to move to a bigger shoe size. I was a very active kid and I wore my shoes out very quickly. They grew with me. While growing up I also had many influences and in a way I like to think I followed in their footsteps. Now that I am older I have realized that I have left footprints for others to follow. In analyzing my education and what education means to me, I realized some of my most influential learning experiences were outside of school. Also, most of my most influential learning experiences were taken in over a period of time. I have chosen three parts of my life and focused on lessons that have helped create who I am today. For my past I chose a beat up pair of black converse that got me through my adolescent years. I chose a pair of fancy heels that I now wear out to parties and special occasions. For my future I have also chosen a pair of shoes but I do not yet know what those shoes will look like; I do not yet know where I want to be in the future. Maybe they will be an attractive pair of flats or a comfortable pair of classy heels.

The summer after 7th grade I was swimming for a township swim team and I made a deal with my dad: if I get gold medals in my individual events and any medal in my relay that he would buy me a pair of converse. I won the bet and my dad bought me a pair of black low-top converse. I loved these shoes and I wore them all the time. I wore them to school and I would even wear them in gym class. I wore them throughout the school year and into the next summer. I had them on for my first kiss and the first time a boy asked me to b his girlfriend. I wore them through our entire week long relationship.

These shoes lasted into 9th grade. I would still wear them to school and gym class. When I started going to parties I would wear these shoes. The first time I drank and the first time I smoked I was wearing these shoes. These shoes were on my feet when I would sneak out of my house late at night without my parents knowing. These shoes were on my feet when my parents found out and grounded me. I wore them when I was skipping class with my friends or skipping school entirely. They lasted through my first love and my first heartbreak. They lasted through 10th grade, 11th grade, 12th grade, and the summers.

My friends would write on these shoes and I would draw on them. They began to get pretty worn and I remember how some of the holes or marks got there. I remember walking on train tracks, with a good friend, for miles talking and bullshitting; the backs got real worn from these walks. My friend Billy wrote “I love Sam” on one shoe and my friend Josh drew a heart and wrote my boyfriend’s name in it. The heart eventually got filled with black marker when we broke up. I would pick at them sometimes which probably did not help their condition.

I still continued to wear the converse into college. I wore them when I moved into my dorm room freshman year and when I first met my roommate. I wore them when I first began going to frat parties, and I still wore them after I joined a sorority. I wore them to class and pretty much everywhere else. Then, one day freshman year, my friend told me I looked homeless because of how beat up my shoes were. At first I was offended, but then I realized they were pretty beat up. I decided to retire them and get a new pair. I still have them at home, I can't throw them out.

These shoes represent my past. I wore them for years, and in those years I experienced many things that made me who I am today. These shoes went through every stage with me; they went through the good and the bad. I believe I experienced many influential and tough times during my adolescence. I think back at how painful and fun those times were and I know how intensely they affected who I am today. I will remember some of those experiences for my whole life and I know I cannot say the same thing about the classes I took during that time. I am the person I am today because of those experiences and what I learned from them. The shoes stayed the same size but I continued to grow through my education.

I was never much of a person to wear heels. I owned one pair and I hated them. My mom would make me wear them to dances but I always brought socks or sandals to change into freshman and sophomore year in college I would wear sneakers with my going out clothes. They were comfortable and I didn't have to worry about falling. They didn’t match my outfit but I never cared and some boys were impressed by this “coloring outside the lines”.

This past summer I decided I wanted to buy a nice pair of wedges. I went shopping with my best friend and we found the cutest pair of black wedges. I bought them and I wore them to a dinner that my work has every year for the staff. I felt tall, confident, and attractive in these shoes. I felt more grown up almost, more mature. I started experiences new events in these shoes; events that will affect my life.

These shoes are my present. I am growing up and maturing and in these maturing moments I need mature shoes to wear. I am not the same person I was, wearing those converse 24/7. I am more responsible and intelligent and I have a lot more common sense.

These shoes are who I am now. I am a junior in college. I am having fun right now in life while I am figuring out what I want to do in the future. These are almost a transition pair of shoes. They have memories, and I look forward to making more memories in these shoes. They are very different from my past shoes, and I probably will not wear them as long or as frequently as my past shoes, but they are my present.

As of now, I do not know what I want to do in the future. I know I will attend graduate school and after graduate school I may get a PhD or even go to law school. After my schooling I want to find a job that makes me truly happy. I want to enjoy going to work. I do not know what kind of work I want to do yet, but I’m sure I’ll figure it out along the way. Whatever my future holds, I know I want to be happy and successful in whatever I may end up doing.

I also know that whatever I may be doing will involve me wearing a pair of shoes. I do not know what kind yet but I know I cannot wear those beat up converse or my cute heeled, wedges. The converse represent my adolescent past and my heeled, wedges represent my fun transition phase. In my future I will need a sturdy, practical, comfortable, and even professional pair of shoes. They may be an attractive pair of flats that I wear in an office job or even a pair of professional heels that I wear to court.

Wherever I end up in the future, I know there will be many experiences in my life that got me to where I will be. I also know those moments will forever be in my mind, reminding me why I am where I am, doing what I am doing. I know there are many people from my past whose footsteps I followed to reach my future. I also know I will have impacted others that I have had experiences with and they may walk in my shoes or take a different path.

Life is a journey. This journey is filled with obstacles that are usually very difficult to get around. My journey is my way to growing up and getting my education from experiences, friends and family. We may be lucky enough to receive luxuries that help us through these obstacles, but for the most part we are on our own. My friends and family were there or me every step of my journey—whether I accepted their help or not. We walk down this path and sometimes there are footprints left on the path which we can choose to follow. We can also choose to follow our own path and make our own footprints. I chose my path that had some footprints left from other but many I chose for myself. Each path has its own risks and benefits and different factors and motives go into deciding which path is right. At the end of our journey we can look back and see our trail of footprints that others may follow or ignore. I took others advice and I learned from my own mistakes. Wherever we end up is exactly where we should and we should not regret the path we took. I am happy where I am and, if I had the chance, I would not have changed my path.

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